

Burlap Pastel Painting

This easily constructed project offers an exploration of texture, line and color – key elements of design. Younger children may take a more abstract approach with emphasis on texture and color. Older students will find the burlap easy to pull and the weave easy to manipulate, creating holes and lines. Subject matter such as buildings, landscapes and abstract designs are adaptable to varying grade levels.

Grade Levels K-6

Note: Instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Process

1. Cut burlap into 6" x 6" squares. The coarse, loosely woven nature of burlap will result in slightly uneven pieces, which is fine. Give each student one piece. They can create more texture by pulling out threads: hold an exposed end of a thread and pull it out of the main piece. This leaves a space. Pull out one or two more in the same place and a gap is created in the fabric. Widen the gap to create an interesting shape. Save the loose threads for using as lines in the overall painting.
2. Paint the canvas background with any acrylic color that will give contrast to the burlap. White can be mixed in varying amounts to create several shades of a color. Fluorescent paints offer vibrant colors! Let canvas dry.
3. Place the burlap on the painted background and at this point decide on subject matter (rather than pre-drawing). More burlap can be removed or stretched. Glue into position.
4. The final design step is to apply the pastels to the burlap. Use traditional pastel techniques. Shade color over color in layers. The pastels will drop down under the burlap in open spaces and result in a very handsome depth of color.
5. Older students may want to spray the different layers as they work. This will tend to darken the color slightly. Spray the final art work if desired. Pastels cling to the burlap well and will not fall off as easily as from some other surfaces.



Materials

[Blick® Economy Canvas Panels](#), classpack of 24, 8" x 10" (07015-1012); need one panel per student

[Natural Burlap](#), 36"W x 1-yd (63202-1436); cut to 6" x 6" pieces, need one piece per student

[Blickrylic® Student Acrylics](#), basic color 6-pint set (00711-1049); share across classroom

[Blick® Pastels](#), classpack of 144 (20016-1449); share across classroom

[Snippy® Scissors](#), pkg of 12, pointed (57040-2009); need one per student

[Elmer's® Glue-All](#), 7-5/8 oz (23810-1005); share 2 bottles across classroom

Optional:

[Blair® Spray Matte Fixative](#), Low Odor (21708-1002)

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #1 Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

K-4 Students know the differences between materials, techniques, and processes

5-8 Students intentionally take advantage of the qualities and characteristics of art media, techniques, and processes to enhance communication of their experiences and ideas

Content Standard #2 — Using knowledge of structures and functions

K-4 Students describe how different expressive features and organizational principles cause different responses

5-8 Students generalize about the effects of visual structures and functions and reflect upon these effects in their own work